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# CIA Director Says Gorbachev's Future Is 'Increasingly Uncertain'

By RUTH SINAI

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WASHINGTON (AP) - Retiring CIA Director William Webster suggested today that Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev would not be able to stop the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its economic collapse.

"Gorbachev's future is increasingly uncertain," Webster said in a farewell interview with reporters to mark the end of his four-year tenure.

In recent weeks the Soviet leader has shifted back toward political and economic reform after veering toward the hardline conservatives, but "the question is - is it too late for Gorbachev?" Webster said.

Republic leaders like Russian President Boris Yeltsin are increasingly viewing Gorbachev as the "residual power" of the central government to be tolerated while the republics pursue their independent agendas, he said.

Webster said the Kremlin appears increasingly nervous that domestic turmoil could erode Moscow's control over weapons of mass destruction deployed around the country.

"We see them paying more attention to this in ways that would suggest they're not as confident" as they once were that they have full control over those weapons, he said.

"This is an area we're going to have to watch very carefully," said Webster.

Webster said Moscow was asking for Western economic aid but did not appear to have a master plan for making good use of such help. Specifically, he said, Gorbachev's government wasn't addressing the drastic problems plaguing the country's roads, bridges, electricity and telecommunications.

"I cannot understand why this has never been central to their objectives," he said.

Webster predicted Gorbachev would keep pushing reform plans to move the country from its decaying, centralized economic system toward privatization and free market. But, he added, "I don't think it'll stop the republics on their way to the exit door."

On other issues, Webster said:

-Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is "very much in charge" and the United States and its allies must keep up their blockade of his oil exports to prevent him from acquiring the money to rearm.

-The United States is disappointed that countries that had once strongly supported efforts to stop drug-growing and production appear to have rolled back from their commitment. He cited Colombia in particular.

Webster, who served nine years as director of the FBI before coming to the CIA in 1987, announced earlier this month he was retiring from government service to practice law. President Bush has nominated his deputy national security adviser, Robert Gates, to succeed Webster pending Senate approval.